2022 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Grand Forks & District Public Library

CHECKLIST

For the PLGR to be considered complete, please ensure you have provided information for each of the following sections. Suggested word counts have been included for each question, but feel free to include more or less text as needed – text boxes will expand as you type. Click on a title in the list below to jump to that section of the document.

INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Provide a brief description of the community and library, focusing on what has changed in the past year. If provincial funding is primarily used to support your library's core operations, please include a general describe where it is applied (staffing, utilities, collections, etc.).

The Grand Forks & District Public Library is located in the heart of the Kootenay Boundary region. Serving the communities of the City of Grand Forks, Christina Lake (Area C), and rural Grand Forks (Area D), our library is an important community hub for a population of approximately 9000 people. Our population is a bit older than in other British Columbia communities, with many choosing Grand Forks and the surrounding area as a place to retire. Although it can be a quiet place during the winter, warmer months find our area bustling with tourists coming to enjoy the unparalleled beauty of the sunshine and our stunning lakes, rivers, and mountains. Industry in our area includes logging, agriculture, and some manufacturing. There is something for everyone in Grand Forks and the surrounding area, and at the Grand Forks & District Public Library we strive to provide excellent service to all demographics of our community.

All provincial funding accounts for only 9% of the library's total operations budget, with the remainder provided by local government. Provincial funds are used toward staffing and collections.

2. FEATURED PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Please describe any featured projects/programs the library has delivered in the past year. To report on multiple projects/programs, "copy" the blank table below and insert additional tables as needed using the "paste" function. Use one table per project/program. You do not need to report on every project/program, only highlights/notable examples.

Project/Program Name

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.
In October, we installed a Meescan self-checkout machine. This advent was made possible by a deal negotiated by the Kootenay Library Federation which greatly reduced both the startup and the subscription fees involved with the system.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?
The library's strategic plan in 2022 was focused on post-pandemic recovery, including finding innovative ways to provide our services, and restoring our usage statistics to pre-pandemic levels. We hoped a self-checkout would help us toward both goals.

How does this project/program support the **B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service** from the strategic plan, which include: 1. Improving Access 2. Building Capacity 3. Advancing Citizen Engagement 4. Enhancing Governance
Creating a self-checkout option for patrons is significant capacity builder for library staff. By giving patrons the option to check out their own materials, staff are free to engage in longer reference interactions without worry of a lineup developing behind the person they are helping. A self-checkout also improves access to our collections. Patrons who are neurodivergent or have mental health concerns and are not comfortable interacting with library staff are able to physically check out materials without speaking to anyone, if they so choose. It also opens opportunities for patrons to check out potentially sensitive materials without worry that someone will see what they're borrowing.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?
Circulation statistics reached and then exceeded pre-pandemic levels at the end of 2022. We have found that more than 20% of our total circulations are now going through the Meescan unit. With this option now available, staff are spending more time interacting with patrons who need individual attention.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?
No.

Project/Program Name
Blended Programming

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.
In early 2022, we reintroduced in-person programming. This was met with mixed reactions - many people were eager to return to in-person gatherings, but many others were reticent to gather in groups or had become comfortable with Zoom during the pandemic and have come to prefer it. To accommodate as many people are possible to join our programs, we now offer many of them in hybrid versions. Our Friends of the Library purchased us a Meeting Owl Pro camera in 2021, and this has become a crucial tool in our programming as we move forward. We offer our regular board meetings, book clubs, Writers' Guild, and several one-off programs in hybrid, with a combination of people meeting in person and others Zooming in. We have also used the technology for staff professional development with good results.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?
Providing hybrid programming has also been a step toward finding innovative ways to provide our services, and restoring our usage statistics to pre-pandemic levels.

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service from the strategic plan, which include: 1. Improving Access 2. Building Capacity 3. Advancing Citizen Engagement 4. Enhancing Governance
Giving a virtual participation option for our programming improves access to anyone who is unable or unwilling to visit the library in person for any reason. Having board members and staff Zoom in for meetings and professional development activities also helps us to build capacity.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?
Programming attendance statistics in the latter half of 2022 neared those in 2019. Hybrid meetings have reduced board member absenteeism due to illness or other obligations.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?
No.

Project/Program Name
From the Heart Learning Circle

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.
Modeled on a program offered by Nelson Public Library, in June 2022, we implemented a new program called "From the Heart Learning Circle". This is a weekly discussion group focused on issues related to Truth and Reconciliation. With funding from LawMatters, the Library provided all group members with a copy of *Okanagan Women's Voices*, a title focussed on women's experiences during the initial settlement period in Sylix territory. Initially, the group met largely as a book club to discuss this title once a month, but transitioned into a weekly meeting with more free-flowing discussions. Regular participants include both people who identify as Indigenous or Metis and people of other races.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?
Although not explicitly mentioned in our current strategic plan, all public libraries in Canada were called by the Truth and Reconciliation Council of Canada to do better in advancing reconciliation. This program is one of the actions this Library has taken in this effort.

How does this project/program support the **B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service** from the strategic plan, which include: 1. Improving Access 2. Building Capacity 3. Advancing Citizen Engagement 4. Enhancing Governance
This program helps advance citizen engagement by providing a way for individuals to advance their reconciliation journeys.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?
12 people regularly participate in this program. 100% of participants report learning something helpful in their reconciliation journeys, an intention to apply what they have learned, increased confidence in these learnings, and increased awareness of related library resources and services.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?
No.

3. CHALLENGES

The following topics have been identified as recurring themes in previous years' PLGRs. The intent of this section is to collect detailed information in a structured, consistent format.

Please select the most significant challenges that the library has faced in the past year that you wish to comment on. Leave any other listed topics blank. Use the 'Other' row to include any ongoing or past challenges that not included in this list. If you have more than one 'Other' item to add, please insert additional rows into the table.

Challenge	Briefly describe how this challenge has impacted the library/community, and what steps the library took to address it in 2022. Please specify if any provincial funding was used, e.g., annual library funding, the technology grant, other non-PLB provincial grants (up to 250 words per topic).
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	COVID-19 continued to be a significant hardship for our Library in 2022. • Staff absenteeism Although we have so far avoided any COVID-19 outbreaks internally, we still faced ongoing staffing issues due to illness. This meant that we frequently acted short staffed, and even closed the library early on a few occasions. • Proof of vaccination The technological knowledge required was very high for individuals to access their proof of vaccination. This took a significant amount of library staff time and was a frustrating experience for both staff and patrons. • ArriveCan Grand Forks and Christina Lake are both home to busy border crossings. When the ArriveCan system was required for reentering Canada, border staff were sending members of the public to us with promises that we would help them get set up. This process sometimes took over an hour, and virtually always at least 30 minutes, and staff were required to assist the entire time if patrons were to be successful. At no point was the library warned that we would be sent an influx of people and would be expected to be experts in this program. In the first months of 2022, we saw at least two patrons each day who required assistance getting set up with or using Arrivecan.
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	Costs of goods and services continues to rise while funding stays relatively static. We did receive a small operating increase from the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary that allowed us to continue in our reduced capacity as in 2021. At the end of 2022, we completed collective bargaining with CUPE. We were unable to meet their inflation-based wage requests as none of our funders will provide us with such a large increase, and so staff raises in 2022 were capped at 2%. Local government is concerned about our increasing reliance on them to make up increasing funding shortfalls as the gap between local and provincial funding for library services widens. While one-time funding has been appreciated, both in actual dollars to the library and in services through

	organizations like the BC Libraries Cooperative, we still need increased, regular operational funding to continue offering the services demanded by our patrons and local governments. Funding certain digital collections has certainly saved us some money or provided us with something we would not otherwise have been able to afford, but it does not help us achieve adequate staffing levels, add enough to our physical collection, or give us options" in case of emergencies or other hardships.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health, and wellness)	Recruitment for all positions has become more difficult over the past year. Historically, we had at least a dozen applicants for both of our Summer Reading Club student position, while in 2022, we received only 2 applications for 2 positions. Recruiting for our regular positions is also difficult due to the part-time nature of the job postings. While the hourly wages are good for our location, the hours offered are not, and so finding quality applicants is increasingly difficult.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	People experiencing homelessness and mental health crises continue to spend a lot of time in the library. While there are continued behavioural concerns with these populations, the issue is not as much of a hardship for us as it has been in previous years. This is likely due a combination of improved staff training and awareness, and to the year-round shelter that is now available in another area of Grand Forks.
Other (please specify)	We are increasingly reliant on interlibrary loans to supplement our collection, and we are also frequently visited by members of other nearby libraries so that they can access our items with the OneCard system because their libraries cannot afford them.

4. COVID-19 RELIEF & RECOVERY GRANT – 2022 PROGRESS REPORT

Summary and Overview

Please provide an executive summary (overview summary) on the library's use of the COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Grants. The purpose of this section is not to duplicate the individual projects details, instead provide a short analysis and summary of your overall approach and progress. Please limit to 2 paragraphs and feel free to use bullet points.

Summary and Overview
We used the entire COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Grant toward a renovation project to make the building more accessible. The entire project came to slightly less than $100,000. The amount from this grant, $26,293.46, was put toward the replacement of our front doors. We now have sliding automatic doors which are safe and accessible for everyone. The total cost of the door installation was approximately $50,000, so this exhausted the grant. We used the Emergency Planning & Preparedness Grant to update our digital data backup from an in-house system using interchanging disks to a cloud-based system. This cost $1083 to complete. We put the remaining funds into a reserve fund to be accessed in emergency situations where the library needs to be open for additional hours, such as during a severe heat wave or flood.

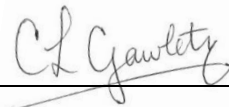|	Grant budget	Reallocated budget
COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Grant Amount	$26,293.46	
Emergency Planning & Preparedness Grant Amount	$8764.49	
Total Grant Amount	$35,057.95	

Project Progress Report

Please use this section for:

1. Report progress on projects included interim report **and**/ **or**
2. New projects developed since interim report (copy and paste tables as needed)

Project/Program/Activity	Front door replacement
Rationale	Library front doors were not safe nor accessible
Area of Need	Infrastructure
Action/Output/Deliverable	New front doors
Outcome/Impact	The library is now much more accessible and safe for all visitors. It is also brighter and more pleasant, which, while not the aim, is a nice outcome.
Metrics	
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	
Expenditure	$50,000
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Complete
Comments (optional)	

5. BOARD APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _CL Gawlety_   Date: 21 March 2023

Board Chair Signature: _Mkuerens_   Date: 21 March 2023